Illness, Self, and Society

Socl 314, Spring 2013 MW 8:30-9:45
Instructor: Elaine R. Cleeton, Ph.D. Email: cleeton@ geneseo.edu
Office: Sturges 122A Office Hours: M/W 8:00-8:20, 1:00-2:00 or by appt

Objectives: Health and illness often are viewed to be biological matters that are best understood from a medical perspective. Even social scientists sometimes use a medical perspective when studying health and illness. This course, however, will view health and illness primarily as social matters. We will do this by considering questions including: How do we define what we consider to be health or illness? What is it like to be healthy or ill? How do our relationships with others affect what we do in matters involving health and illness? Throughout the course we will examine how intersecting identities, among them race, class, gender, sexuality, and abilities, affect experiences with health and illness. This study of illness will reference classical, feminist materialist, cultural, and post-modern theoretical approaches to the study of the social production of knowledge.

Goals and Outcomes: The major goals of the course are as follows:
1) To develop a general understanding of health and illness as socially constructed phenomena
2) To understand the health and illness experiences of individuals
3) To understand how major social characteristics affect these experiences
4) To understand and apply theories of the social production of knowledge

These goals are related to several outcomes for courses that were adopted by the Department of Sociology, including:
1) An understanding of the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality.
2) An understanding of the basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations
3) An in-depth understanding of this sociological area
4) Ability to think critically
5) Ability to write effectively

Outcomes Assessment:
A. Group-produced list of references illuminating works of assigned theorist
B. Group-led class discussions (see course outline), include record of group member participation
C. "What is missing" 3-5-page essay exploring mind-body from perspective of assigned readings and theorists examined in class.

Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete all reading assignments by the date listed on the syllabus, contribute to a group presentation, and complete a research paper.
To receive a passing grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

Required Texts
Mansion of Happiness
God's Hotel
Waking
Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers

Theory groups
Marx – poverty
Weber – religion
Freud – psychology
Foucault – power relations
Judith Butler – identity
Patricia Hill Collins – narrative
Donna Haraway – nature
Dorothy Smith – sociology for the people

Course Outline

Subject to Change with Adequate Notice

I. Sociology and the Study of Illness

Week 1	W: Introduction to course, group assignments
January 23	
Week 2	M: Milne 104, Sue Ann Brainard, librarian
January 28, 30	W: bring computer to class, meet in groups
Week 3	M: Milne 104, Sue Ann Brainard, librarian
Feb 4, 6	W: bring computer to class, meet in groups

II. Trauma

Waking, Matthew Sanford

Week 4	M: Marx, Weber
February 11, 13	W: Freud, Foucault
Week 5	M: Butler, Collins
February 18, 20	W: Haraway, Smith

III. Process of Recovery

God's Hotel, Victoria Sweet

Week 6	M: Group preparation, bring computers
February 25, 27	W: Group preparation, bring computers
Week 7	M: Marx, Weber
March 4, 6	W: Freud, Foucault
Week 8	M: Butler, Collins
March 11, 12	W: Haraway, Smith

SPRING BREAK

IV. Stress Management

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers, Robert M. Sapolsky

Week 9	M: Group preparation, bring computers
March 25, 27	W: Group preparation, bring computers
Week 10	M: Marx, Weber
April 1, 3	W: Freud, Foucault
Week 11	M: Butler, Collins
April 8, 10	W: Haraway, Smith

V. Life Course Milestones

Mansion of Happiness, Jill Lepore

Week 12	M: Group preparation, bring computers
April 15, 17	W: Group preparation, bring computers
Week 13	M: Marx, Weber
April 22, 24	M: Freud, Foucault
Week 14	M: Butler, Collins
April 29, May 1	W: Haraway, Smith
Week 15	**Wrap Up**
May 6	M: Reference list, group participation record submitted on line

Final Examination

Monday, May 13, 8:00 - 11 a.m., Students comment on learning experience
Essay submitted on line